

BS 5930:2015+A1:2020



BSI Standards Publication

**Code of practice for ground
investigations**

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Contents

	Foreword	v
	Introduction	1
1	Scope	3
2	Normative references	3
3	Terms and definitions	6
Section 1: Preliminary considerations		7
4	Primary objectives	9
5	Safety on investigation sites	10
6	Personnel for ground investigations	13
7	Investigation strategy	15
8	Planning and control of investigations	16
9	Quality management	17
Section 2: Desk study and field reconnaissance		18
10	General	18
	<i>Table 1 – Desk study: Typical factual core</i>	19
11	Desk study	19
12	Field reconnaissance	20
	<i>Table 2 – Desk study: Typical interpretative elements</i>	20
13	Earlier uses and state of site	21
14	Aerial photographs and satellite imagery	23
Section 3: Planning ground investigations		26
15	Types of ground investigation	26
16	Geological mapping	28
17	Scope of the ground investigation	29
18	Frequency of sampling and testing	36
19	General considerations in the selection of methods of ground investigation	38
20	The effect of ground conditions on the selection of methods of intrusive investigation	42
21	Ground chemically aggressive or prone to volume change	51
22	Ground investigation over water	53
Section 4: Exploratory holes		57
23	Surveying of investigation points	57
24	Excavations and boreholes	57
25	Sampling the ground	66
	<i>Figure 1 – Basic details of open-tube sampler</i>	71
	<i>Figure 2 – A typical thin-walled sampler</i>	74
	<i>Figure 3 – U100 sampler</i>	75
	<i>Figure 4 – Basic details of a piston sampler</i>	76
	<i>Table 4 – Mass of soil sample required for various laboratory tests</i>	69
26	Groundwater monitoring and sampling	83
Section 5: Geophysical field investigations		88
27	General	88
28	The use of geophysical surveys as part of a ground investigation	88
29	Geophysical techniques	89
	<i>Table 5 – Geophysical methods in ground investigation</i>	90

	<i>Table 6 – Usefulness of engineering geophysical methods</i>	91
30	Application of geophysical techniques	93
31	Specification and planning of a geophysical survey	95
Section 6: Description of soils and rocks		97
32	The description process	97
	<i>Figure 5 – Selection of descriptive procedure for different materials</i>	97
	<i>Figure 6 – General identification and description of soils</i>	98
33	Description of soils	98
	<i>Table 7 – Field identification and description of soils</i>	100
	<i>Table 8 – Terms for description of consistency</i>	102
	<i>Table 9 – Terms for classification of strength</i>	103
	<i>Table 10 – Terms for classification of relative density</i>	104
	<i>Table 11 – Assessment of field density</i>	104
	<i>Figure 7 – Angularity terms</i>	107
	<i>Table 12 – Terms for very coarse soils</i>	108
	<i>Table 13 – Terms for mixtures of very coarse soils</i>	109
	<i>Table 14 – Terms for mixtures of very coarse and finer soils</i>	109
	<i>Table 15 – Terms for mixtures of finer and very coarse soils</i>	109
	<i>Table 16 – Terms for mixtures of coarse soils</i>	110
	<i>Table 17 – Terms for mixtures of coarse and fine soils</i>	111
	<i>Table 18 – Some example descriptions of anthropogenic soils</i>	112
	<i>Table 19 – Terms for description of odours</i>	113
	<i>Table 20 – Types of peats</i>	115
34	A1 Field procedures for description of primary inorganic soil fraction A1	116
	<i>Table 21 – Description of condition of peats</i>	115
	<i>Table 22 – Terms for description of secondary organic matter in an inorganic soil</i>	115
	<i>Table 23 – Terms for description of plasticity</i>	118
	<i>Table 24 – Decision on fine soil type from results of hand tests</i>	119
35	Classification of soils	119
36	Description and classification of rocks	119
	<i>Table 25 – Terms for description of rock strength</i>	121
	<i>Table 26 – Terms for description of thickness and spacing of structure</i>	122
	<i>Table 27 – Aid to identification of rocks for engineering purposes</i>	123
	<i>Table 28 – Stability of rock material</i>	125
	<i>Figure 9 – Description and classification of weathered rock for engineering purposes</i>	128
	<i>Table 29 – Types of discontinuity</i>	130
	<i>Table 30 – Terminology and checklist for rock discontinuity description</i>	131
	<i>Table 31 – Terms for classification of discontinuity state (see Figure 10)</i>	133
	<i>Figure 10 – Application of fracture state terms for rock cores</i>	134
	<i>Table 32 – Example rock descriptions</i>	134
Section 7: Field tests		136
37	General	136
	<i>Table 33 – The applicability and usefulness of in-situ tests</i>	137
38	Probing	138
39	Static cone penetration testing	140
40	Flat dilatometer test	142
41	Standard penetration test	143
42	Vane test	144
43	Pressuremeter tests	145

44	Field density	148
45	In-situ stress measurements	150
	<i>Figure 11 – Measurement of in-situ stress – CSIRO cell</i>	152
	<i>Figure 12 – Measurement of in-situ stress – Borre probe</i>	153
	<i>Figure 13 – Measurement of in-situ stress – Flat jack equipment – Typical layout</i>	154
46	Bearing tests	155
	<i>Figure 14 – Types of bearing test equipment – Plate test equipment for 864 mm diameter</i>	156
	<i>Figure 15 – Types of bearing test equipment – Jacking in adit-type of loading equipment</i>	157
47	In-situ shear tests	162
	<i>Figure 16 – Equipment layout for shear and sliding friction test on rock or soil samples</i>	162
48	Geohydraulic testing	164
49	Large-scale field trials	167
Section 8: Field instrumentation		171
50	General	171
51	Planning a field monitoring programme	172
52	Groundwater measurements	172
	<i>Figure 17 – Typical response times for various piezometers</i>	174
	<i>Figure 18 – Examples of observation well and standpipe piezometer construction</i>	175
	<i>Figure 19 – Schematic of a Bishop-type twin-tube piezometer</i>	177
	<i>Figure 20 – Schematic of a Ridley-type flushable piezometer</i>	178
	<i>Figure 21 – Schematic of a pneumatic piezometer</i>	178
	<i>Figure 22 – Schematic of a vibrating wire piezometer</i>	179
	<i>Figure 23 – Schematic of a strain gauge piezometer</i>	180
	<i>Table 34 – Typical cement-bentonite grout mixes for piezometers</i>	182
53	Inclinometers	182
	<i>Figure 24 – Probe inclinometer system</i>	182
	<i>Table 35 – Typical cement-bentonite grout mixes for inclinometers and extensometers</i>	183
54	Extensometers	187
	<i>Figure 25 – Magnetic probe extensometer system</i>	188
	<i>Figure 26 – Rod extensometer system</i>	189
Section 9: Laboratory tests on samples		190
55	General	190
56	Roles and responsibilities	190
57	Health and safety in laboratories	190
58	Sample storage and inspection facilities	191
59	Selection of testing programme	193
60	Visual examination and description of laboratory samples	193
61	Laboratory tests	194
	<i>Table 37 – Common laboratory tests for soils</i>	195
	<i>Table 38 – Swelling and shrinkage tests</i>	204
	<i>Table 39 – Specialist laboratory tests for soils</i>	205
	<i>Table 40 – Rock testing</i>	206
	<i>Table 41 – Tests for aggregate suitability</i>	208
	<i>Table 42 – Geophysical laboratory tests</i>	210
Section 10: Reports and interpretation		212
62	General	212
	<i>Table 43 – Summary of reporting requirements</i>	213
63	Reports	216

Section 11: Review during and after construction	228
64 General	228
65 Purpose of review	228
66 Information required	228
67 Monitoring	229
68 Reporting	229
Annex A (informative) National safety legislation and guidance	230
Annex B (informative) General information for a desk study	234
Annex C (informative) Sources of information	237
<i>Table C.1 – BGS maps</i>	239
Annex D (informative) Detailed information for design and construction	246
Annex E (informative) Notes on field reconnaissance	249
Annex F (informative) Ground investigations and development in ground potentially containing voids	251
<i>Figure F.1 – Principal types of void</i>	252
<i>Table F.1 – Principal types of void</i>	253
<i>Table F.2 – Natural voids: potential hazards</i>	255
<i>Table F.3 – Anthropogenic voids: potential hazards</i>	257
Annex G (informative) Integrated investigations	260
<i>Table G.1 – Identification of principal potential hazards relating to contamination</i>	266
<i>Figure G.1 – Layout at the time of the investigation</i>	267
<i>Figure G.2 – Proposed layout and trial pit location plan</i>	268
Annex H (informative) Photographic records	269
Bibliography	271

Summary of pages

This document comprises a front cover, an inside front cover, pages i to vi, pages 1 to 285, an inside back cover and a back cover.

Foreword

Publishing information

This British Standard is published by BSI Standards Limited, under licence from The British Standards Institution, and came into effect on 31 July 2015. It was prepared by Subcommittee B/526/3, *Site investigation and ground testing*, under the authority of Technical Committee B/526, *Geotechnics*. A list of organizations represented on these committees can be obtained on request to their secretary.

Supersession

BS 5930:2015 superseded BS 5930:1999+A2:2010, which was withdrawn.

BS 5930:2015+A1:2020 supersedes BS 5930:2015, which is withdrawn.

Information about this document

The first edition of this British Standard (published as CP2001:1957) covered basic guidance on effective ground investigation. This was replaced by full editions in 1981 and 1999, which covered the subject matter in greater detail and each of which was brought up to date at the time of publication. The 1999 edition was amended twice to incorporate changes necessary to maintain compliance with BS EN 1997-1 and BS EN 1997-2 and their related standards.

BS 5930:2015 was a full revision of the standard, and introduced the following principal changes.

- The majority of changes arose from the further implementation into UK practice of BS EN 1997-1 and BS EN 1997-2 and the related test standards cited therein and the need to conform to these standards.
- The revision of material that was out of date. There was new information on geophysical surveying and ground testing and updated guidance on ground investigations on contaminated ground, changes to accommodate the requirements of data capture in the field and the inclusion of this in reporting as well as other amendments throughout the standard.

Text introduced or altered by Amendment No. 1 is indicated in the text by tags A1 A1. Minor editorial changes are not tagged.

Product certification. Users of this British Standard are advised to consider the desirability of third-party certification with this British Standard. Appropriate conformity attestation arrangements are described in BS 2475-3. Users seeking assistance in identifying appropriate conformity assessment bodies or schemes may ask BSI to forward their enquiries to the relevant association.

Test laboratory accreditation. Users of this British Standard are advised to consider the desirability of selecting test laboratories that are accredited to BS EN ISO/IEC 17025 by a national or international accreditation body.

Use of this document

As a code of practice, this British Standard takes the form of guidance and recommendations. It should not be quoted as if it were a specification and particular care should be taken to ensure that claims of compliance are not misleading.

Any user claiming compliance with this British Standard is expected to be able to justify any course of action that deviates from its recommendations.

It has been assumed in the preparation of this British Standard that the execution of its provisions will be entrusted to appropriately qualified and experienced people, for whose use it has been produced.

Presentational conventions

The provisions of this standard are presented in roman (i.e. upright) type. Its recommendations are expressed in sentences in which the principal auxiliary verb is “should”.

Commentary, explanation and general informative material is presented in smaller italic type, and does not constitute a normative element.

The word “should” is used to express recommendations of this standard. The word “may” is used in the text to express permissibility, e.g. as an alternative to the primary recommendation of the clause. The word “can” is used to express possibility, e.g. a consequence of an action or an event.

Notes and commentaries are provided throughout the text of this standard. Notes give references and additional information that are important but do not form part of the recommendations. Commentaries give background information.

Contractual and legal considerations

This publication does not purport to include all the necessary provisions of a contract. Users are responsible for its correct application.

Compliance with a British Standard cannot confer immunity from legal obligations.

Introduction

The ground is naturally variable and often the nature of these variations is not known. A ground investigation is a process starting with initial documentation about the site and its environs followed by continuous exploration and interpretation, with the scope of the investigation requiring regular amendment in the light of the data being obtained.

This British Standard is set out to follow, in broad terms, the sequence of a ground investigation from initial considerations through the phased design and implementation of an investigation programme and its reporting, to the continuing investigation during and after construction.

Section 1 of this British Standard deals with those matters of a technical, legal or environmental character that need to be taken into account in selecting the site (or in determining whether a selected site is suitable) and in preparing the design of the works. The safety of all those involved in investigation, including the general public and the environment, is also introduced here to emphasize its fundamental importance in the execution of all aspects of the investigation; this coverage is referred to but not repeated throughout the standard.

Section 2 outlines the procedures that should be followed and the information that should be collected in desk studies and field reconnaissance.

Section 3 discusses general aspects of planning investigations, including the factors that influence the selection of methods of investigation.

Section 4 discusses methods of intrusive investigation, including overwater investigations (i.e. those carried out using land-based methods), sub-divided into excavations and boreholes, sampling, and groundwater observations.

Section 5 outlines the methods of geophysics that can be used for ground mapping, characterization and testing, from the ground surface, boreholes, crosshole and surface to borehole and overwater.

Section 6 deals with the terminology and systems recommended for use in describing and classifying soil and rock materials and soil and rock masses.

Section 7 describes the range of field tests that can be considered to measure appropriate geotechnical parameters.

Section 8 outlines the instrumentation that can be used to measure parameters or monitor field conditions.

Section 9 describes the range of laboratory tests on samples that can be used to measure a range of geotechnical parameters for material classification and use in design.

Section 10 provides details of the information that is to be included in field reports, the presentation and validation of factual information in the investigation report and in the interpretation of the data obtained from the investigation and the preparation of the design report.

Section 11 describes the requirements of investigation that continues into and beyond the construction phase, including the requirements for monitoring and maintenance of the structure.

Users of this British Standard, particularly those with limited experience, are advised to study the preliminary considerations in Section 1 and Section 2 before referring to the methods of ground investigation in Section 3 to Section 10. Development continues to take place, and this is likely to involve changes in some of the methods. For this reason, it is important to ensure that the planning, supervision and interpretation of results of any investigation is carried out by suitably qualified and experienced specialists (see Clause 6).

It might be noted that there is an imbalance of treatment between tests; in some cases, more comprehensive treatment has been given to tests less frequently used. This is because many of the common tests are described extensively elsewhere in national and international standards whereas there is a paucity of reference to other tests.

This British Standard has been drawn up mainly in relation to conditions existing in the United Kingdom, but reference is made to technical and professional practice in other countries where relevant.

In this British Standard the term ground investigation (previously called site investigation in the UK) is used in the wider sense of investigation of the site, which includes desk studies, field reconnaissance and field and laboratory work within the broad geographical, geological, hydrogeological and environmental contexts.

1 Scope

This British Standard gives recommendations for the investigation of sites for the purposes of assessing their suitability for the construction of civil engineering and building works and of acquiring knowledge of the characteristics of a site that could affect the design and construction of such work and the security of neighbouring land and property.

NOTE 1 The use of soil and rock as construction materials is treated only briefly; further information is given in BS 6031.

This British Standard provides guidance on the application of BS EN 1997-1 and BS EN 1997-2 and the related test standards cited therein.

It does not provide guidance on investigations for contamination or naturally elevated concentrations of potentially hazardous substances (these are dealt with in BS 10175). Nor does it provide guidance on investigations for ground gas (these are dealt with in BS 8576). However, it does provide guidance on the integration of geotechnical investigations with investigations for contamination or ground gas and other types of investigations (e.g. archaeological).

A1 *NOTE 2 BS 10175 is used with the BS ISO 18400 series of standards. Much of the detailed guidance in earlier versions of BS 10175 has been replaced or supplemented by reference to parts of the BS ISO 18400 series. For simplicity and to avoid repetition, all references to BS 10175 in this British Standard embrace the need to refer to applicable parts of the BS ISO 18400 series of standards as necessary.* **A1**

2 Normative references

The following documents, in whole or in part, are normatively referenced in this document and are indispensable for its application. For dated references, only the edition cited applies. For undated references, the latest edition of the referenced document (including any amendments) applies.

Standards publications

BS 1377-1: **A1** 2016 **A1**, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 1: General requirements and sample preparation*

BS 1377-2:1990, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 2: Classification tests*¹⁾

BS 1377-3: **A1** 2018 **A1**, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 3: Chemical and electro chemical tests*

BS 1377-4:1990, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 4: Compaction related tests*

BS 1377-5:1990, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 5: Compressibility, permeability and durability tests*¹⁾

BS 1377-6:1990, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 6: Consolidation and permeability tests in hydraulic cells and with pore pressure measurement*¹⁾

BS 1377-7:1990, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 7: Shear strength tests (total stress)*¹⁾

BS 1377-8:1990, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 8: Shear strength tests (effective stress)*¹⁾

BS 1377-9:1990, *Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes – Part 9: In-situ tests*

BS 8550, *Guide for the auditing of water quality sampling*

¹⁾ Partially replaced